

Name of project/symbol:

Assessment and Monitoring of the Fishery Resources and the Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily – MedSudMed (GCP/RER/010/ITA Module II)

Participating countries:

Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Tunisia

Donor:

Italy through the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF)

Beginning and ending dates:

April 2001–October 2008

Vucciria Market, Palermo

FAO/A. Candeloro



MedSudMed for Fishery Resources and Ecosystems in the Straits of Sicily



Objective

The Straits of Sicily is one of the most important fishing areas of the Mediterranean Sea, where significant fleets operate with high fish production. Yet, the available knowledge on fishery resources and their ecosystems in the region is often scarce. The MedSudMed project was created to strengthen the national and regional research capacities and to promote scientific cooperation in the southern part of the central Mediterranean for the assessment and monitoring of fishery resources. The Project's main objective is to improve the knowledge on fishery resources and their ecosystems – as a contribution to the development of responsible fisheries management – by supporting research activities related to the interactions between demersal and small pelagic fishery resources and biotic and abiotic environmental factors.

Target beneficiaries

The beneficiaries include the national scientific institutions in the participating countries involved in research activities at a regional level as well as the fisheries administrations of the participating governments. To a larger extent, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) benefits from the improved information and monitoring system.

Main achievements

The Project's most important achievement is the establishment of a sub-regional system for monitoring fisheries resources that involves the research institutions of the participating countries. The Project has begun the extensive work of standardizing methodologies and protocols in the context of the research activities. The Project has successfully produced baseline scientific information on fishery resources relevant to fisheries management.

The Project has promoted scientific and technical cooperation in the central Mediterranean and created a basis for cooperative fisheries research in the area through a series of actions, such as:

- developing and implementing standardized methodologies and monitoring programmes based on uniform sampling and

Lepidopus caudatus

FAO/A. Candeloro



Fishing net

FAO/N. Milone



data processing for small pelagic fish and demersal fisheries resources. These standardized protocols were used during the nine surveys at sea performed in the Straits of Sicily area, which allowed data collection in areas where no information, or only outdated information, was available;

- increasing knowledge on the spatial distribution of fish stocks, in particular for target species that are of common interest for the four participating countries, by illustrating the localization of spawning and nursery areas and the main characteristics of fish assemblages, and providing a description of the main oceanographic patterns characterizing the Project area with the intention of correlating it with the spatial distribution of the different life phases of fishery resources at regional scale;
- carrying out a multidisciplinary pilot study to investigate the relations between the main spatial distribution patterns of demersal fisheries resources and environmental features and fishing characteristics, in accordance with the research requirements related to the ecosystem approach to fisheries;
- organizing 27 meetings attended by national research institutes and 12 training courses involving more than 100 fisheries experts, to provide an opportunity to develop an exchange platform for sharing information and joint data management and processing at a regional scale; and
- providing technical support to the subsidiary bodies of the GFCM and exchanging information and technical support with the other FAO regional fisheries projects in the Mediterranean (AdriaMed, CopeMed, MedFisis and EastMed).

For further information, contact:

MedSudMed

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